

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM
SUBCOMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT, FINANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY
TODD RUSSELL PLATTS, CHAIRMAN



MEDIA ADVISORY

For immediate release:
Monday, July 24, 2006

Contact: Tabetha Mueller
(202) 225-3741

Platts Looks at FOIA Improvements

What: **Oversight Hearing: “Implementing FOIA – Does the Bush Administration’s Executive Order Improve Processing?”**

When: **Wednesday, July 26, 2006, 2:00 p.m.**

Where: **Room 2247 Rayburn House Office Building**

The House Government Management, Finance, and Accountability Subcommittee will conduct an oversight hearing on implementation of the Freedom of Information Act. On the heels of the Subcommittee’s first look at FOIA in May of 2005, President Bush issued Executive Order 13392, *Improving Agency Disclosure of Information*, on December 14, 2005, requiring agencies to review FOIA compliance operations and develop specific improvement plans. Those improvement plans were submitted to the Attorney General and the OMB Director on June 14, 2006.

This hearing will provide an opportunity to discuss agencies’ improvement plans and proposed legislation that would enhance and strengthen FOIA. Members will hear from the Department of Justice, which is responsible for FOIA compliance government wide, and the Government Accountability Office (GAO), which has evaluated agencies’ improvement plans. FOIA requestors will also testify on improvements to the process since the issuance of the Executive Order.

Requirements of Executive Order 13392: The stated policy in the Executive Order is: “A citizen-centered and results-oriented approach will improve service and performance, thereby strengthening compliance with FOIA, and will help avoid disputes and related litigation.”

Agency Responsibilities

- Designate Chief FOIA Officer and Establish Requester Service Center;
- Chief FOIA Officer shall designate one or more FOIA Public Liaisons and conduct a review of agency FOIA Operations;

- Report to the Attorney General and OMB Director results of the review of FOIA operations and provide a copy of the agency-specific FOIA plan within six months of the date of the Executive Order (June 14, 2006).

Attorney General's Responsibilities

- Using agency reports required by the Executive Order, the Attorney General shall submit to the President a report within 10 months of the date of the Executive Order (October 14, 2006);
- Issue instructions and guidance to the heads of agencies as appropriate to develop the agency-specific plans and provide the reports required by the Executive Order.

Pending FOIA Legislation:

S. 394/H.R. 867 OPEN Government Act of 2005

S. 589/H.R. 1620 Faster FOIA Act of 2005

H.R. 2331 Restore Open Government Act of 2005

Witnesses:

Panel One

The Honorable John Cornyn
United States Senator from Texas

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
United States Senator from Vermont

The Honorable Brad Sherman
Member of Congress
27th District of California

Panel Two

Mr. Daniel Metcalfe, Director
Office of Information and Privacy
U.S. Department of Justice

Ms. Linda Koontz, Director
Information Management Issues
Government Accountability Office

Panel Three

Ms. Tonda Rush, Public Policy Director
National Newspaper Association

Ms. Patrice McDermott, Director
Open The Government.Org

###